**Structured Small Group Program**

**Component #1: Needs, Goals, Objectives**

**Title of your Group Program:** Becoming Strategizers

**Rationale/Need**

School – Hillcrest High School, Greenville, SC

Recent school report card results have shown a need for improvement in AYP. For the last two years, though Hillcrest High has maintained an absolute rating of ‘good’ its growth rating has been ‘at risk’ or ‘below average’ and within the last five years the growth rating has be ‘at risk’ two times. State exit exam HSAP requirements have not been met in English or math for the last two years. Percentages show that white students are meeting the objectives, but African-American, disabled and students on subsidized meal plans are not.

Results for end-of-course state testing in biology show that 76.5% of all students are below basic or below required proficiency. US history also has results that fall below the acceptable level of achievement.

Questionnaires were sent to 10-11th grade teachers of English, math, science, and history in an effort to receive feedback on student needs that they perceive are hindering student progress. The questionnaires revealed that a majority of teachers feel that student study skills are contributing to the lack of success on standardized tests.

**Population:**

This group is for repeating sophomores or juniors who have not passed HSAP and at least one of the end-of-course exams required for graduation.

**Recruitment and Screening:**

Guidance will compile a list of repeating sophomores and juniors who have not passed the HSAP and at least one of the end-of-course exams required for graduation. This list will then be sent to teachers who have these students and teachers will recommend students they feel could benefit from group therapy with a focus on study skills.

After teachers have identified prospective students, students will be asked about their interest in the group. If the students are unwilling to or unmotivated to learn new ways to approach their studying, they will be cut from the list. The students left will be asked to join the group.

Parents will need to provide permission. Because the participation in the group is based on students failing a test, students’ general results will be revealed. FERPA will require that parents give permission to be part of a program where student’s academic information is revealed to others not directly involved in the academic need-to-know group.

**Group Structure:**

This psychoeducational group is a closed group that will last eight weeks that will have six participants. The group will meet in a guidance conference room. Each session will last 30 minutes of a 90 minute class period. In an effort to avoid taking time from one class period, sessions will begin 1st period and rotate through 4th period and back through one time. It will take place during the 2nd nine weeks of the school year.

**Overarching goal for the group program**

Students will employ study and testing strategies to achieve academic success in core courses including,

* SQRW
* SQ3R
* KWL
* DETER
* Mind dump

**Importance of data-driven, needs-based programming**

NCLB legislation has made it vital that all persons within the education environment are striving toward the academic improvement and achievement of students that is driven by empirical research. Erford (2010) believes that counselors need to be accountable in the process evaluation and the outcome evaluation. If counselors are unable to “provide accountability data to back them up, counseling services are often among the first to go during budget cutbacks” (Erford, 2010, p. 295).

**Component #2: Research-Supported and Standards-Based Content**

**Title of Session #4:** SQRW – Strategies for reading and taking notes from a textbook.

**Brief Summary of Session:** Many times students approach a textbook without a plan or an understanding of the basis for how a textbook is set up and how to glean information from it. This session will help equip students with a reading strategy that they can employ across all disciplines and will offer them a specific solution to a common problem, “I don’t understand what I am reading.”

**Theoretical Orientation:** Solution-focused therapy

**Specific Group Technique:** Doing Something Different

**Duration:** 30 minutes

**Materials/ Media:** Textbook; handout of SQRW strategies

**Core ASCA Standard(s):**

A:A1.1 Articulate feelings of competence and confidence as learners

A:A2.2 Demonstrate how effort and persistence positively affect learning

A:A3.4 Demonstrate dependability, productivity and initiative

**Core South Carolina Mathematics Standards(s):**

IA-1.1 Communicate a knowledge of algebraic relationships by using mathematical terminology appropriately.

**Objectives:**

After discussion of effective reading strategies, students will journal one strategy that they can apply to textbook reading.

When assigned a textbook chapter to read on algebraic relationships and mathematical terminology, the student will be able to implement the SQRW model with 100% accuracy.

**Assessments:**

In your journal, write one way that one step of the SQRW model has been helpful in learning from your textbook.

The student has taken one page of notes on one chapter in his/her Algebra textbook, using the SQRW model.

**Procedures/Instructional Strategy:**

1. Begin the session with a discussion about organization in their textbooks. Students will be encouraged to look at their textbook and explain what they normally do when assigned a reading assignment by a teacher.
2. Students will report on challenges and successes that they have had when applying reading strategies to previous experiences.
3. Counselor will explain how SQRW, a reading strategy, can increase understanding of reading assignments.
4. Counselor will have a set of math textbooks and model how the student may apply the strategy to an introduction of unit in the textbook.
5. Students will model the technique on a brief assigned passage from the Algebra textbook pp. 304-307.
6. Counselor will work with the students, answering questions and guiding.
7. When they are finished, the counselor will focus student attention on which step in the strategy was the beneficial to them.
8. Assign homework/ownwork.

Vaca and Vaca (1998) report that reading specialists agree that textbook reading activities significantly impact reading skills (as cited in Walker & Huber, 2002).

Ideally, better note-taking skills in one course are transferrable to other courses. After seeing the benefits of how taking notes on reading assignments can assist in learning lesson objectives, more than 75% of the students said that note launchers encouraged note-taking in other classes (Helms & Helms, 2010).

**Homework/Ownwork:**

Students will choose a regular education class that assigns chapter reading and apply the strategy. Students will bring in a copy of the work completed and be prepared to discuss how they found the technique to be helpful in one concrete way.

**Group Stage and Emerging Issues:**

Working Stage:

Students who are discouraged or unwilling to take responsibility for their choices and their progress in school.

Students may resist applying new strategies because they struggle with confidence in bettering academic achievement.

Leader’s may struggle to create hope for better results in school.

**Title of Session #5:** DETER – Strategies for taking tests

**Brief Summary of Session:**

Students will discuss reasons they feel that they are not successful on tests. From this discussion, I will introduce DETER, a test-taking strategy, that students can apply to taking assessments. Students will be given the strategy that they can take with them. Also, students the will apply technique to a test that they are given by me. Finally, students will be given homework to accomplish in their regular education courses that applies the technique learned group.

**Theoretical Orientation:** Solution-Focused Therapy

**Specific Group Technique:** Breaking Patterns/Doing Something Different

**Duration:** 30 minutes

**Materials/ Media:** A brief test that is formatted into different parts with different points. A whiteboard. Handouts with the DETER strategy preprinted for students. A follow-up assessment to check for application of the skill.

**Core ASCA Standard(s):**

A:A1.1 Articulate feelings of competence and confidence as learners

A:A2.1 Apply time-management and task-management skills

A:A3.4 Demonstrate dependability, productivity and initiative

**Core South Carolina English Standards(s):**

Standard E3-2The student will read and comprehend a variety of informational textsin print and nonprint formats.

**Objectives:**

After discussion of effective testing strategies, students will journal one strategy they can apply to test taking.

Given a literature test, students will be able to apply two of the DETER test taking strategies in how to pass the test with a 70%.

**Assessments:**

Using the model test provided, students will review the test using the DETER model and determine how they would apply the strategy. Students will list the two of the DETER strategies and explain how using them will increase their possibility in passing the test.

**Procedures/Instructional Strategy:**

1. Ask students to reflect on what they do when they are given a test. Actually give them a test and ask them how they would take it.
2. Use this as a lead-in to the technique “Breaking Patterns”/“Doing Something Different”. Help students understand that they can be successful by trying something else if their current methods are not achieving success. Get students to discuss times when they tried something different and it was successful for them.
3. Pass out the preprinted instructions on the DETER model used for test-taking.
4. Discuss the steps. Stopping after each to provide verbal examples and take questions.
5. Pass out a test and have students look at the test and determine how they would apply the DETER model.
6. Assign the homework/ownwork.

**Homework/Ownwork:**

Students will ask their teacher if they may use these tips on their next assessment (have it as a reference on their desk) and when grades are given back students will compare scores with a previous assessment and be prepared to discuss the difference between the grades, if any exist.

**Group Stage and Emerging Issues:**

Working Stage:

Students who are discouraged or unwilling to take responsibility for their choices and their progress in school.

Resistance to applying new strategies because students struggle with confidence in bettering academic achievement.

Leader’s struggle to create hope for better results in school.

**Component #3: Ethical, Legal, Multicultural**

1. **Student identifies ethical and legal considerations in group work with minors in the schools and those specific to this group program.**

FERFA laws state that student grades can only be available to those necessary for academic reasons. Because of the limitations of the law, parental consent will need to be obtained before students are placed in group. Students will need to agree to confidentiality before access to the group and will need to be reminded throughout the process.

Ethically, the counselor will need to establish trust and hope in the group during initial sessions. Because these students have felt failure in the educational process it is important to establish that this is normal and ok. Students will also need to be taught to not verbally attack other student’s performance.

1. **Student creates a signed consent form to be distributed to parents of students prior to participation in group counseling to include limits to confidentiality in group work (attach as a supplemental form in LiveText for this section).**
2. **Student identifies how the group program is culturally sensitive, describes how issues of conflict, bias, prejudice, oppression, and discrimination are to be addressed during group, and identifies strategies included in the group program that promote a positive, caring, and safe learning group environments.**

Test scores reveal that a majority of students who are failing are African-American males. When developing the groups the counselor will need to do some purposeful sampling so that this group does not feel they are being targeted because of race. The same is also true in relation to poverty level students.

1. **Student discusses the importance of carefully considering issues related to ethics, legal, professional, and cultural significance in the group process from making group opportunities available an member selection to group termination.**

The counselor needs to carefully consider legal and ethical issues *before* a group begins. In planning beforehand a counselor is more likely to avoid issues that could cause legal or ethical problems personally and in the group. For example, in my group FERPA is a consideration that must be handled before group can begin otherwise laws will be broken. Counselors also need to consider if topics are culturally sensitive to the group. For this group, the counselor needs to be sensitive to perceived or real academic injustices felt by African-American males and those of low socioeconomic status. Because the population of this group may need additional help after group, the counselor may need to have a list of community organizations that may be able to give to the students’ families.

**Component #4; Program Evaluation**

1. **Student creates a pre-post measure for session #1 that includes only one multiple choice item for each session objectives for a total of two items (one for the school counseling content and one for the core academic content).**
2. **Student creates a pre-post measure for session #2 that includes only one multiple choice item for each session objective for a total of two items (one for the school counseling content and one for the core academic content).**
3. **Student briefly describes the importance of program evaluation and outcome-driven programming in professional school counseling.**

**References**

<http://www.greenville.k12.sc.us/hillcrest/about/portfolio/2011%20School%20Report%20Card.pdf>

<http://ed.sc.gov/data/eocep/district_eocep.cfm?ID=2301&year=2011>

http://ed.sc.gov/agency/pr/standards-and-curriculum/documents/2007MathematicsStandards.pdf

**Helping students read science textbooks**

Bradford Walker; Richard A Huber

*Science Scope;* Sep 2002; 26, 1; Research Library 39-40.

Note launchers: promoting active reading of mathematics textbooks

Author(s): [Josh W. Helms](http://go.galegroup.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/ps/advancedSearch.do?inputFieldName%280%29=AU&prodId=AONE&userGroupName=vic_liberty&method=doSearch&inputFieldValue%280%29=%22Josh+W.+Helms%22&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm) and [Kimberly Turner Helms](http://go.galegroup.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/ps/advancedSearch.do?inputFieldName%280%29=AU&prodId=AONE&userGroupName=vic_liberty&method=doSearch&inputFieldValue%280%29=%22Kimberly+Turner+Helms%22&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm)

Source: [***Journal of College Reading and Learning***](http://go.galegroup.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/ps/aboutJournal.do?pubDate=120100922&actionString=DO_DISPLAY_ABOUT_PAGE&inPS=true&prodId=AONE&userGroupName=vic_liberty&searchType=&docId=GALE%7C0GLD)***.*** 41.1 (Fall 2010): p109-119.